

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of Claims will replace all prior revisions and listings of Claims in the application:

Claims 1-4 (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) A surgical access device for permitting access to body tissue, which comprises:

an access member dimensioned for introduction into body tissue, the access member defining a longitudinal axis and having a longitudinal passage to permit introduction of an ~~elongated~~ object; and

a seal comprising a fabric material and being disposed within the access member, the seal having inner portions defining an aperture extending therethrough adapted to expand from an initial open condition to an expanded open condition upon passage of the ~~elongated~~ object in substantial sealed relation therewith.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal is a septum seal.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal is elongated and extends along the longitudinal axis of the access member.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) The surgical access device according to claim 7 wherein the seal defines a general hourglass configuration.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) The surgical access device according to claim 7 wherein the seal defines a general conical configuration.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal includes an outer layer of an elastomeric material.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A surgical seal assembly, which comprises:
a housing defining a longitudinal axis and having a throughbore; and
a seal member mounted within the housing, the seal member defining an opening in general longitudinal alignment with the throughbore of the housing and adapted to permit passage of an object, the seal member including a resilient material and a fabric material, at least the resilient material ~~of the first element~~ defining the opening and being adapted to resiliently contact the object in a substantially fluid tight manner.

Claim 12. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the fabric material comprises a layer of fabric material.

Claim 13. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein a layer of fabric material is disposed on each of opposed surfaces of the resilient material.

Claim 14. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the resilient material comprises at least two layers of resilient material and the fabric material comprises at least one layer of fabric material at least partially disposed between the at least two layers of resilient material.

Claim 15. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the seal member defines a general hour glass configuration.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the seal member defines a general conical configuration.

Claim 17. (Previously Presented) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the seal member includes a peripheral portion adapted to deform in response to movement of the object in a direction transverse to the longitudinal axis.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn) A method for performing a surgical procedure, comprising the steps of:

accessing an insufflated body cavity with an access device, the access device including an access member defining a throughbore and a seal, the seal comprising a fabric material;

introducing a surgical instrument through the throughbore of the access member and through the seal whereby inner seal portions of the seal form a substantially fluid tight relation with the surgical instrument; and

performing a surgical procedure within the body cavity with the surgical instrument.

Claim 19. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 wherein the seal defines a general hour glass configuration whereby, during the step of introducing, a constricted portion of the seal engages and forms the substantially fluid tight relation with the surgical instrument.

Claim 20. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 18 wherein the seal defines a general conical configuration whereby, during the step of introducing, an inner portion of the seal engages and forms the substantially fluid tight relation with the surgical instrument.

Claim 21. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of introducing includes introducing the surgical instrument so as to deform the fabric material.

Claim 22. (new) The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the inner portions of the seal are dimensioned to form a substantial sealed relation with a surgical instrument introduced within the aperture.

Claim 23. (new) A surgical seal assembly according to claim 11 wherein the opening of the seal member is adapted to form a substantial sealed relation with a surgical instrument.

Claim 24. (new) A surgical access device, which comprises:
an access housing dimensioned for insertion into body tissue to provide access through the body tissue and to an underlying surgical site, the access housing defining a longitudinal axis and having a throughbore to permit passage of an object toward the surgical site; and

a seal comprising a fabric material and being disposed relative to the access housing, the seal including inner portions adapted to permit passage of the object and to form a substantial sealed relation with the object.

Claim 25. (new) The surgical access device according to claim 24 wherein the seal includes an elastomeric material.

Claim 26. (new) The surgical seal assembly according to claim 25 wherein the fabric material of the seal is at least partially embedded in the elastomeric material of the seal.

Claim 27. (new) The surgical seal assembly according to claim 25 wherein the inner portions of the seal define an aperture adapted to expand from an initial condition to an expanded condition upon passage of the object and in substantial sealed relation therewith.